NAXOS
A Guided Tour of
The Romantic Era
Volume 11

WIENIAWSKI, HENRYK (1835–1880)

1 Violin Concerto No. 2 in D minor, Op. 22, I. Allegro moderato
2 Souvenir de Moscou, Op. 6
3 Légende, Op. 17
4 Scherzo-tarantelle, Op. 16

SAINT-SAËNS, CAMILLE (1835–1921)

5 Samson et Dalila, Bacchanale
6 Danse macabre in G minor, Op. 40
7 Symphony No. 3 in C minor, Op. 78, 'Organ', II. Allegro moderato – Presto – Allegro moderato – Presto – Allegro moderato
8 Carnival of the Animals, I. Introduction et marche royale du lion (Introduction and Royal March of the Lion)
9 Introduction and Rondo capriccioso in A minor, Op. 28
10 Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 22, I. Andante sostenuto
11 Havanaise, Op. 83
12 Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 33, I. Allegro non troppo
13 Violin Concerto No. 3 in B minor, Op. 61, I. Allegro non troppo
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15 Clarinet Sonata in E flat major, Op. 167, I. Allegretto
16 Cello Sonata No. 1 in C minor, Op. 32, I. Allegro
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20 Fantaisie in E flat major

DELIBES, LÉO (1836–1891)

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22 Lakmé, Dôme épais, le jasmin

BALAKIREV, MILY (1837–1910)

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29 Yevreyskaya melodiya (Hebrew melody)

BIZET, GEORGES (1838–1875)

30 Carmen, Prélude
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35 Jeux d'enfants, I. Marche

BRUCH, MAX (1838–1920)

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MUSSORGSKY, MODEST (1839–1881)

40 Boris Godunov: A Symphonic Synthesis (arr. L. Stokowski)
41 Khovanshchina, Act IV: Entr'acte (arr. L. Stokowski)
42 St. John's Night on Bald Mountain, 'A Night on the Bare Mountain' (arr. L. Stokowski)
43 Pictures at an Exhibition
44 Une larme
45 Pesnya Mefistofelya v pogrebke Auerbakha (Mephistopheles's Song in Auerbach's Cellar), 'Song of the Flea'
46 Pesni i plyaski smerti (Songs and Dances of Death), No. 1. Lullaby

WIENIAWSKI, HENRYK (1835–1880)

Polish violinist Henryk Wieniawski, was born in 1835. He entered the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied with Lambert Massart (1811–1892). In 1848 he travelled to St Petersburg, where his performances impressed Vieuxtemps. He returned to Paris to acquire the necessary skills for composition. Aged fifteen, he embarked on a full career as a virtuoso, accompanied by his younger brother Józef, a pianist. Between 1851 and 1853 the Wieniawskis gave numerous concerts in Russia. Henryk had already turned his attention to composition, with a *Grand caprice fantastique* in 1847 and an *Allegro de sonate* the following year in collaboration with his brother. By 1853 he had written some fourteen compositions for violin and piano and violin and orchestra. After further concert tours he accepted an invitation from Rubinstein to join the staff of the St Petersburg Conservatory, where he served from 1860 until 1872. Exhausting concert tours of the United States of America were followed by his appointment as the successor to Vieuxtemps at the Brussels Conservatory, where he taught until 1877. He continued his performing career, despite deteriorating health. In Russia again he set out on a concert-tour but this was interrupted by a breakdown in health. He died in Moscow on the last day of March, 1880, at the age of forty-four.

VIOLIN MUSIC (Tracks 1-4)
Wieniawski's compositions were principally for his own use. They include two important violin concertos as well as a number of pieces designed to display his technical and romantic musical accomplishments. His *Souvenir de Moscou*, *Souvenir de Posen* and *Le carnaval russe* may be considered a concession to Russian audiences, while the *Reminiscences of San Francisco* were no doubt designed as a compliment to the audiences of that city.

SAINT-SAËNS, CAMILLE (1835–1921)

Once described as the French Mendelssohn, Camille Saint-Saëns enjoyed a long and prolific career as a composer. As a younger man he was a leading supporter of newer tendencies in French music: in old age his opposition to Debussy, whom he outlived by three years, earned him a reputation as an enemy of what was seen as progress. Following established French tradition, he was for nearly 20 years organist at the Madeleine in Paris and taught briefly at the École Niedermeyer, where he befriended his pupil Gabriel Fauré. He was a co-founder of the important Société Nationale de Musique with the patriotic aim of promoting contemporary French music in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870/1, in which he had served in the Garde Nationale de la Seine. In his personal life Saint-Saëns was not always fortunate: his marriage at the age of 40 to a nineteen-year-old was disastrous. In 1881 Saint-Saëns, on holiday with his wife, simply walked out, never to return. For the remaining 40 years of his life, he lavished affection on his dogs and on his pupil Fauré. By the time of his death in 1921, his popularity in France had diminished considerably, as fashions in music had changed.

OPERA (Track 5)
The best known of the 13 operas completed by Saint-Saëns is *Samson et Dalila*, a romantic treatment of the biblical story. His pastiche dances from the unhistorical opera *Henry VIII* may also be heard in concert performance. He also composed a ballet, *Javotte*, and some incidental music.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC (Tracks 6-8)
The 'Organ' Symphony – the third of the three numbered symphonies by Saint-Saëns, so named from the use of the instrument in the work – is the best known. Other popular orchestral works include *Le Rouet d'Omphal*e ('Omphale's Wheel') and the *Danse macabre*.

CONCERTOS (Tracks 9-14)
Saint-Saëns, a fine pianist himself, wrote five piano concertos, three violin concertos and two cello concertos. Both the *Introduction and Rondo capriccioso* and *Havanaise* are familiar in the repertoire for violin and orchestra.

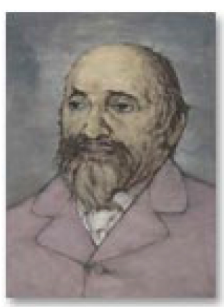
CHAMBER MUSIC (Tracks 15-19)
Saint-Saëns was prolific in his provision of chamber music, with a series of duo sonatas, including two violin sonatas, two cello sonatas and a variety of other pieces. *The Carnival of the Animals*, often heard in more expanded form, was originally a private joke for the enjoyment of his friends, and was first scored for a small chamber ensemble.

KEYBOARD MUSIC (Track 20)
Saint-Saëns, distinguished as a pianist and organist, wrote for both instruments, as well as for the harmonium. His organ music includes the *Fantaisie* in E flat, his first such composition and among the most popular with recitalists. His piano music is sadly little-known today.

DELIBES, LÉO (1836–1891)

The art of ballet in France reached a new height in the middle of the 19th century, coinciding with the early career of Léo Delibes, who entered the Conservatoire in 1848 and five years later took a position as accompanist at the Théatre Lyrique. Like many other composers he was employed also as an organist, from 1862 until 1871 at Saint-Jean-Saint-François, but his primary interest lay in music for the theatre. For the Théatre Lyrique he wrote comic operas and for the Folies Nouvelles (and other companies) operettas, while continuing to compose music for the church. An appointment as accompanist at the Opéra in 1863 brought Delibes other opportunities. He was allowed to associate with the respected ballet composer Ludwig Minkus (1826–1917) in the composition of the ballet *La Source* in 1866. He was so successful that a commission followed for a divertissement, *Le pas des fleurs*, to be added to Adolphe Adam's (1803–1856) *Le Corsaire*. Delibes won his greatest popular success with the score for *Coppélia*, commissioned in 1870 and his first complete ballet score. This was followed six years later by *Sylvia* and in 1883 by the important *Opéra Lakmé*. His last Opéra was *Kassya,* orchestrated by Jules Massenet (1842–1912) and staged two years after the composer's death in 1891.

STAGE WORKS (Tracks 21-22)
Delibes is primarily associated with ballet, though he only wrote three. He won early success with *Coppélia*, the story of old Dr Coppelius and his doll Coppélia, who seems to come to life. He followed this in 1876 with *Sylvia*, set in pagan Greece. His opera *Lakmé* (one of four complete operas) is sometimes revived, and provides the well-known 'Bell Song' for ambitious coloratura sopranos. The 'Flower Duet', popularised by its recent commercial use, remains singularly attractive. Delibes also wrote a certain amount of incidental music.



BALAKIREV, MILY (1837–1910)

Born on 2 January 1837 at Nizhny-Novgorod, Balakirev was the self-appointed leader of 'The Five', or 'The Mighty Handful', a group that was comprised of César Cui, Mussorgsky, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov and Balakirev himself. In 1855, with the financial support of a local land-owner and amateur musician, Balakirev moved to St. Petersburg. Here he barely eked out a living, mostly by giving private lessons. He soon began to attract a loyal following of gifted pupils, and by 1862 he was the acknowledged musical leader of the Mighty Handful, who espoused Russian nationalism through their use of folk material. Balakirev headed the Russian Music Society for two years until 1869, when he was forced to resign. There followed a period of self-imposed exile. His own success as a composer was intermittent, largely owing to eccentricities of character and a tendency to make enemies through his own overwhelming enthusiasm and intolerance of other ideas. His last years were largely bitter ones, for the general public continued to ignore his music. Balakirev was particularly opposed to the establishment of music conservatories in Russia by the Rubinstein brothers, and was accused in his turn of amateurism.

CONCERTOS (Tracks 36-38)
Known in his lifetime as a composer of choral works, Bruch is now remembered chiefly for a handful of orchestral compositions. He left three symphonies in addition to a variety of other, shorter orchestral compositions, including a Serenade, a *Romance for Viola*, and works based on Celtic and Russian melodies.

OTHER SELECTED WORKS (Track 39)

MUSSORGSKY, MODEST (1839–1881)

The second half of the nineteenth century brought with it a burgeoning of Russian culture. In music, nationalism was represented by 'The Five', described by the polymath Stasov as the Mighty Handful: Balakirev, Cui, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin. Except for their self-appointed leader, Balakirev, the others were essentially amateur, at least in their musical origins. Mussorgsky was born in 1839, the son of a land-owner. As a young army officer he had musical ambitions, and without any training in composition tried his hand at an opera, as well as lesser composition, for the entertainment of his friends. It was a meeting with Cui and with the composer Alexander Dargomizhsky (1813–1869) that led him to a more influential association with Balakirev and Stasov. After leaving the army, Mussorgsky held various positions in the civil service. At his death in 1881, the result of epilepsy induced by alcoholism, he left a great deal unfinished, including the opera *Khovanshchina*, later completed by Rimsky-Korsakov, who took it upon himself to serve as musical executor to both Mussorgsky and Borodin. His great Russian opera *Boris Godunav* was to be revised by Rimsky-Korsakov, who applied his technical abilities to smoothing out apparent crudities in this and other work.

OPERA (Tracks 40-42)
The greatest of Mussorgsky's creations was the opera *Boris Godunov*, based on Pushkin and Karamazin. He completed the first version in 1869 and a second version in the 1870s, but it was Rimsky-Korsakov's version that was first performed outside Russia. Other operas by Mussorgsky include *Khovanshchina*, completed and orchestrated by Rimsky-Korsakov. The unfinished opera *Sorochintsy Fair*, after Gogol, includes the orchestral favourite *A Night on the Bare Mountain*—an orchestral witches' sabbath.

PIANO MUSIC (Tracks 43-44)
Mussorgsky's 1874 suite *Pictures at an Exhibition* has proved the most popular of all the composer's works, both in its original version for piano and in colourful orchestral versions. He also wrote a number of lesser-known pieces, including sonatas, scherzos, impromptus and preludes.

OTHER SELECTED WORKS (Tracks 45-46)

Text by Keith Anderson, David McCleery, David Patmore and Caroline Waight

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